

1 May 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Plans

SUBJECT : Conferences with AID with Respect to
Building a Road

1. The Undersigned has been in contact with Mr. Frank A. Osmanski and Mr. George O. Lodoen of AID with respect to his idea of building a road in VIETNAM. Both of these men are retired Major Generals (Army) and have had considerable experience in Viet Nameese logistics. I have known both of them since 1946.

2. This matter is of primary concern to AID and probably of little interest to this Agency.

3. Inasmuch as I have spent considerable thought on this matter and have in my mind an elaborate concept of operations, it is requested that I be permitted to continue this liaison for the good of the Government making such arrangements as are best - to be on loan or even transferred to AID.



STAT

*ME/ Please File
in quiet place*

PROPOSAL FOR A STUDY OF MEANS TO PREVENT INFILTRATION
OF MILITARY AND MATERIAL INTO SOUTH VIETNAM FROM NORTH
VIETNAM AND INITIATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

It is believed that by the introduction of a road network in Southeast Asia (initially in South Vietnam) similar to that of the U.S. Interstate System, much can be accomplished to help control that region against incursions of Communist Forces and other bandit groups as well as assist ultimately in the economic development of the region as mentioned in President Johnson's speech at John Hopkins University.

The introduction of an interstate highway system would provide a positive measure of development rather than the negative associations connoted by the introduction of barriers. However, large highways themselves can be used very successfully in the control of an area. They are far less susceptible to ambush, can be easily surveilled. Troops can be rushed to the scene of an engagement at rates exceeding a mile a minute, in fact the highway itself can be used as an airstrip and troops could be flown in. The wide expanse of the highway provides an excellent field of fire and the judicious piling of fill material can provide excellent earthenworks facing likely avenues of approach.

Of the highest priority would be such a highway stretching from DONG HA near the coast initially to LAO BAO on the Laotian border and thereafter west across Laos to SAVANNAKHET on the Thai border. (See map attached.) This highway would intercept and thus, if adequately controlled, interdict the famed Ho Chi Minh Trail in the vicinity of TCHEPONE, Laos. Near this route and flowing in an easterly and westerly directions are the SONG QUANG TRI and SE BANG HIENG rivers, respectively. Consideration should be given to placing portions of the route south of these rivers providing an even more formidable barrier.

Ultimately development plans might well call for the establishment of a large port facility near DONG HA of the nature of CAM RANH BAY and a large bridge across the MEKONG at SAVANNAKHET into Thailand. The new port could become an international port serving all three countries, Thailand, Laos, and South Vietnam. It could be so heralded by a treaty between the three countries and the U.S. In the meanwhile, of course, the system would not only serve as a barrier against the infiltration of troops into Southeast Asia, but also as a port facility for the funneling of troops and equipment to meet any enemy challenges all the way west as far as the borders of Northeast Thailand. It would thus provide not only the barrier called for by Senator Mansfield on January 14th, but also a start on the development of this area suggested by President Johnson.

Costwise there is no reason for it to exceed the costs of any other barrier, more likely it would be less. The cost of the interstate highway system in the U.S. approximated \$1,000,000 per mile. There is no reason that the construction (aside from military requirements) should seriously exceed this figure. The highway mentioned as having the greatest priority is only about 200 miles long (50 in South Vietnam and 150 across Laos.) Much of the heavy equipment needed may well be already in the area.

28 April 1967

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: Report on Governmental Contacts Outside of CIA with
Respect to Ideas Concerning the War in Vietnam

1. I had heard, although not seen, a report that the President had requested all members of the Government to produce ideas that would aid in solving the Viet Nameese problem.
2. As a strategic planner of long standing I had independently come across an idea that much of the infiltration into South Viet Nam could be eliminated by producing a barrier across the northernmost province and Laos as well. Because of the psychological problem that a barrier would provide an international image prejudicial to the United States, I felt that this could best be done by using as a barrier a carefully designed roadway. This could thence be promulgated as a step towards peace since it would provide also a much needed avenue for commerce and the general development of this under-developed Southeast Asian area.
3. Having produced such a plan, my next problem was to try to get this planning to the necessary authorities. This was difficult because, of course, it bore no relationship to the responsibilities of the Agency for which I work.
4. My first endeavor was to inform my immediate supervisor of this planning, and then to seek the help of the Chief of the FE Division in order that I might pass the planning to Ambassador Harriman through a special channel that I knew he had. He informed me, however, that he did not think it appropriate to use this channel in this context. I therefore tried to think of other means.

5. At this juncture, Senator Mansfield made a speech (14 January) suggesting that a barrier be placed across South Viet Nam and Laos at precisely the place (existing Route 9) which I, myself, had picked. Clearly I thought the thing to do next would be to send my plan to the Senator.

STAT 6. I inquired among my friends to seek an avenue to get the plan to the Senator. [] an old acquaintance who had worked for me on Agency business, had at that time a business partner named Thomas Owen, a man of considerable experience on "the hill". He is a nephew of former Speaker of the House Bankhead, and has been a personal assistant to Senator Sparkman of Alabama.

7. I asked and Mr. Owen agreed to merely get the plan into Senator Mansfield's hands without reference to me. He next handed it to Mr. John Mahan, Chairman of the Subversive Activities Control Board. Mr. Mahan is from Montana and is a close personal friend of the Senator.

STAT 8. Mr. Mahan requested of Mr. Owen that he arrange for the writer of the plan to brief him on it. Accordingly, at Mr. Mahan's request, I went to his office in the Lafayette Building on Thomas Circle and explained the plan to him. He said that he thought it was a very good idea and that he was going to pass it on to a Mr. Joseph Stanley Kimmitt who currently was Secretary for the Democratic Majority of the Senate. He explained that Mr. Kimmitt, who is also from Montana, was a close personal friend of the Senator. At this interview, realizing that it would be appropriate to have a witness from this Agency, I took with me a close personal friend, [] STAT [] who works for the Chief of the FE Division, and Mr. Owen. At the conclusion of the interview, Mr. Mahan invited us all to lunch at the Statler-Hilton, a most pleasant occasion.

STAT 9. A few days later, I received a call from Mr. Kimmitt who asked me to come to his office and explain the plan to him. Accordingly, I went to his office in Room S-149 of the Capitol and briefed him with the aid of several maps I had accumulated. He then, in my presence, phoned a Mr. Valeo (Secretary of the Senate) who, he explained to me was also Mr. Mansfield's senior aide. Mr. Valeo said that he was too busy at the moment to be briefed (as Mr. Kimmitt had suggested) and requested Mr. Kimmitt to be prepared to brief him personally, later. We then went over the briefing in more detail with Mr. Kimmitt and left.

10. I have not seen or heard from either of these gentlemen since. I have had no other contacts with the Congressional arm of the Government.

11. At a dinner party several weeks ago at N [] house, I met [] who is an Agency officer working on Southeast Asia on the staff under Mr. Walt Rostow. I discussed the road idea with him. He liked it and said he might have an opportunity to obtain Mr. Rostow's reaction. Nothing further has been heard from []

12. Nota bene: All aforementioned persons were carefully informed in front of a witness, that although I worked for the Central Intelligence Agency, I was in this instance representing only myself as a private citizen, and that all the material presented came simply from a map study.

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~~SECRET~~

65-1753

28 April 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. George Carver, Chief, SAVA

You have probably already seen the plan --
I know you have talked to him. My principal purpose in
sending it to you is to see whether this shouldn't be tossed
into the hopper of the Committee which you joined one day
under the influence of a lunch with members of the Policy
and Planning Council. I take it that this Committee has
flourished like a Green Bay ^{*}tree ever since and in all
probability the concept of an interstate highway has long
since been considered.

25X1

* Lower case -
not Parkers.

Desmond FitzGerald
Deputy Director for Plans

25X1

Attachment
Road plan

~~SECRET~~

65-1753

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:		EXTENSION	NO.
Deputy Director for Plans			DATE
TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED	
1. C/SAVA			COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
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Approved For Release 2004/06/14 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000500060043-0

